

HUNZA BABIES

ourselves. Naját and Shukuru and all the children were gathered round, but the men were out at work and the house was (relatively) empty. So while the mother fed the child I learned all I could about orthodox baby management. Until the baby cuts his first tooth his mother will not take him to any house where there is another infant. Possibly it is felt that with one tooth he will be armed for self-defence against his contemporary; possibly the rival mothers might be tempted into tactless comparisons. Up till this point, too, no male of the house may handle him. An amusing little ceremony heralds the cutting of this all-important tooth. Some elderly man—usually the grandfather—"well skilled with children," takes the baby in his arms and out into the open. After that his father and brothers are free to play with him and carry him about.

Until the child is two or thereabouts he lives the life of a recluse, strapped into his cradle night and day except at meal-times, or when taken out for an airing in grown-up arms.

When the moment came for replacing Faqér in his cradle, Naját and Shukuru bestirred themselves and fetched some dry, finely powdered earth which they gently warmed over the ashes of the fire. Bibo Gímo produced a large square of strong cloth, sweet and clean but dark with use, and spread it on the dais, lying the baby down on it with a tiny cushion under his head. Then plenty of the earth—it proved to be pounded sun-dried cow-dung, as clean and inoffensive to handle as the fibre in which we plant our bulbs—was packed round him above and below, and he was carefully parcelled up, arms, legs, and feet, into the stout cloth, bandaged into it with a long binder, and laid in the cradle. When he is "changed" the last lot of packing is thrown on to the fields for their enrichment—and that's that. Very cleanly and ingenious it all is and vastly preferable to the eternal washing of "nappies," which, indeed, would be a grim task with insufficiency of cloths, cold water, and no soap.

The bottom of the cradle was full of nice clean straw with a padded mattress on top, and by the time baby's cushion was adjusted and a red quilt laid up to his chin and well tucked in

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

I had expressed a wish to see what winter life "By the Lamp" was like, and one day Levy Kalbi brought an invitation from his womenfolk to join them some evening in their house. I was warmly welcomed into the living-room, where twenty people were at home and many guests besides myself had been invited. The guests included all our own household except the Kashmiri sweeper. I made my way over to the women's side of the house and murmured such compliments as I could improvise, on the skill and diligence with which they stitched and teased and span. It was amazing. I could only hope that their zeal was perhaps a little extra on my account. Presently, when all had settled down after my incursion, a princely dish of potatoes cooked in *maltash* (producing a sort of Irish stew effect) was set on the floor in the centre and a wicker platter heaped with bread and another piled with grapes. Kalbi had most thoughtfully asked me to have my own dinner before coming, for he feared that I might not be able to enjoy their food (as *maltash* is an inevitable ingredient in any food set before a guest, this was both tactful and humane). Another large dish of grapes was set near me, and the children who clustered round shared them with me without reluctance. 574

Again I marvelled at the spaciousness and freedom gained by an absence of furniture. We must have been thirty or forty in that tiny-seeming room, yet there was no sense of crowding, and there was perfect ease of movement. And again I marvelled at the natural graciousness and instinctive good manners of these unsophisticated folk. My hosts and hostesses, who had never had a European in their house before, made me feel welcome and at home, and were evidently not conscious of the slightest embarrassment themselves. In a few minutes two or three prostrate sausage-rolls of bedding came to life, bright eyes peeped out and the respective mothers' exhortations, "Go to sleep again, darling!" were just as successful as their equivalents in similar circumstances at home. [352]

Only a couple of the very senior men of the family shared the extra feast, but the guests were warmly pressed to fall to. Each folded a flap of bread round his potato and ate it neatly as from an egg-cup. Then Kalbi's old father, the patriarch of 574 538

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

- 574 the twenty, whose great-grandchildren were present in the
538 room, a fine old greybeard, active and handsome still despite his years, set out to tell us his memories of the siege of Chitral and Kelly's famous march to its relief, in which he himself had taken part. That was only four or five years after "the downfall of Hunza," as he phrased it, but numbers of Hunza men enlisted in the British relieving force. (Another neighbour of ours in No. 6 was also one of Kelly's volunteers.) He showed me the sword he had carried and the handsome muzzle-loader with its forked rest, both carefully greased and kept in good condition as befits heirlooms of the kind. He discoursed with a tinge of unconcealed regret on the olden days when men were men and fighting was toward, "though of course peace is best," he added with incomplete conviction in his voice. The others broke in with questions, and led him on to talk of this episode and that, rehearsed no doubt many a time before, and to cap the tale he proudly put his finger through his jaw and out under his ear tracing the path of a Chitrali bullet. This honourable wound he wore more proudly than his medal, though this also was displayed with pride.

While he talked away with ease and modesty even the little children listened with intelligent attention, and you could easily picture them in years to come telling their great-grandchildren: "My great-grandfather used to say . . ." Their tastes uncorrupted by the sensational gossip of the daily press and the melodramatic improbabilities of the screen, their memories not undermined by second-hand book learning, these humble Hunza folk are immensely better educated than the products of our costly schools; not one of them but can tell you all the details of his own lineage for eight or nine generations back on either side. Outside Debrettites, how many of us British folk can do as much?

- 793 A youngster who has a taste that way or who covets the
874 position of a priest in the future, can easily learn to read and write a little Persian and Urdu at the feet of one of the local
[212] khalifas. Burushaski has no script and is never written; nor would it carry anywhere outside the Hunza and Yasin valleys if it were. If he is more ambitious of letters, he can foot the four

BARLEY SOWING AND "STARVATION SPRINGTIME"

600 twin sister. "Is that Kaníza's twin?" It was—twice as big and flourishing as our little Kaníza. By way of making conversation I asked the mother: "Isn't it strange that Anjir should be so much bigger than her twin?" "Not really strange," she said quite simply, "there is food in Báltit." Yet when my photographing was done they pressed me to come in. I made to squat just anywhere on the woman's platform, but they must needs find a rug for me to sit on. They were cooking lentils in a big stone pot on a tripod over a tiny fire, and they produced a dish of boiled potatoes and wanted to share it with me. I took a tiny taste for friendliness, but excused myself from eating more with the phrase I had found gave no offence, "I
574 came, having just eaten." These people's hospitality just left me gasping. That dish of lentils and potatoes was probably the only serious meal of the day for five or six of them. And if I had so little, should I want to stuff any of it into over-fed foreigners? I trow not. We were not conscious of being exactly over-fed in Hunza, but by contrast with what our neighbours—much better folk than we—existed on. . . .

262 Another day I met on the narrow track a perfectly strange
576 lad with a lump of dried apricots in his hand (rather like a lump of the all-glued-together dates you see in a grocer's shop) which he was eating as he walked along. We greeted each other "Jú na!" This is the old-time native greeting, still much more in use than the formal "Salam aleikum" of Islam, which the women scarcely use at all. When you do say "Salam aleikum," the correct Hunza reply is "Salam aleikum." At first, of course, we used to answer: "W'aleikum as salam!" as is usual amongst Muslims elsewhere; but it came to sound stilted and highbrow to our own ears, as I do not doubt it did to theirs. Immediately the boy held out his apricots for me to take some. I tugged a small one off the corner and popped it into my mouth, where it lasted me like chewing-gum for half an hour. These apricots are very good and most sustaining, far tastier than the dried apricots we buy at home, but for serious eating they need to be steeped overnight and then make a delicious dish.

600 A month later, by the third week of March, we were well

No. XL

The Custom in regard to The Tham's Annual Visit to Hèrber.

Every Autumn, in September or October, or on the 15th. or 20th. of Sambula, the Tham sets out for Hèrber taking with him eighty followers and Elders. With ten or fifteen Elders, fifteen men of superior rank, twenty minor servants, seven or eight huntamen, eight bandsmen and four grooms, thus he sets out.

It is the custom for the Elders of Galmit and, in addition, a number of young men, to come as far as Chaman Gul to receive the Tham. Slaying a goat and loading it along with a supply of bread in a panier they bring it to Bulchi Das for his reception. It is called *Otaq*. Then the Tham stops there and eats it. When he has eaten and has gone on to Chacha Hera the women come out on to the edge of the terrace and wave their hands round in the Tham's honour.

(Proceeding) thence they keep playing music in front of the Tham (until) he dismounts at the Galmit dancing place. When the Tham has dismounted they present an ox before him. In former times it was the custom for the Tham to give orders to a distinguished Elder, upon which the latter, they say, seizing the ox and pulling

11 *tailatsum* — probably from *tdc* 'there' and not from *tail* etc. 'such'. There seems to be a verb or two missing in this sentence: the party proceeds, music being played in front of the Tham until the Galmit dancing ground is reached, when the Tham dismounts.

12 *de.ichon* — "they make an ox stand", "they stand up an ox", or "they keep an ox standing for the Tham", a sort of technical expression for presentation.

it backwards smote it with his sword straight down the front line of the (shoulder and) foreleg. Now the present Tham has made them give up this practice. (As) for laying hold of the ox, they still lay hold of it.

Then when the Tham, having dismounted, has taken his seat on the platform at the dancing ground, they bring a small bowl of milk to him. The Tham, saying "Bismillah," drinks a little and enquires of the Headmen: "Are you well?" and they, standing up, reply to the Tham: "You are welcome."

Then the Tham goes into the fort and the servants and elders go off to their respective lodgings. When they have done so the Wakhis bring them *Kurātē Daudas* (a form of food).

Then on the evening of the same day the Headman kills two goats at his house, and then cutting up a lump of ghee, which may be 30 lbs. in weight, he makes *sherbat*. Then, having prepared 15 *chuqs* of wheat bread he conducts the Tham, accompanied by his followers, to his house.

There are two Hunza Trangfas and they go and cut up the bread and meat and prepare the dishes of food. They roast the breast of the one he-goat for the Tham and bring it to the place of assembly, and they convey the breast of the other to the Tham's consort. The kidneys they take to the senior Gushpūr if there is any. One liver they give to the Wazir, if he is there, or, if he has not come, to one of his brothers or his son.

When the Tham goes to the house and when he has arrived at

6 *šwa bama?* — said in Wakhi which is said to be "hafterya?" i. e. *baš*, 'good'; *šwi*, 'are'; *a*, interrog. particle.

The equivalent Wakhi for the Persian *Xod amādi* was given as *šokur ni.az*.
8 *šarḡar* — The Tham's official residence. It is scarcely a 'fort' and certainly not a 'palace' in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

9 *qošḡar* — Shaw given Wakhi *qoš* as "household, quarters, camp". It is also used in Sh. and Kho. It is here glossed 'inhabited house', but seems to mean "lodgings".

11 *niker* — past participle active of **ni.az*.

14 *taq* — i. e. *taq* refers I think only to the meat, cp. l. 12, page 340 below. It was glossed "cutting up".

15 *baskarate* — usually 'ram'; here glossed 'male goat'.

19 *daya.az* — a note adds that the Tham puts a little flour on his head.

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the door, they bring out a bowl of flour, and *ispander* smoke, and a dish of ghee. The Tham touching these and kissing (his fingers) enters the house and sits down on the large dais. The master of the house and his brothers, standing in the centre part of the room, say: "You are welcome!" "God bless you!" replies the Tham. 534
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Then he makes the Elders and followers sit down for a little at the door and he calls up the *Wastir* and then he calls up the *Yerpa*. Then they bring the Elders one by one into the house, and then they bring in the inferior followers, and they make them sit down in their appointed places. After this a personal servant brings water for the Tham to wash his hands, and when they have made the Tham wash his hands they make the Elders wash theirs.

Then they set food before the Tham. The Head Cook and the assistant cooks prepare vegetable soup for the Tham and put the hindquarters of a sheep and *sherbat* with bread before him. Also four cakes of thick bread, and curds in a bowl, and cream in a cup. The Head Cook cuts up the meat for the Tham. 262
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Then they place dishes of food before the leading men, and the meat that is in front of the Tham they dispense to the Elders and followers. There are also the two heads of the goats: one of these with some bread they give to the musicians; the other they give to the grooms. To the hunters they give the fat tail (of the sheep) which is in front of the *Mir*. They give two dishes (of food) to each party separately. To the Bodyguard they give five dishes.

Then to the Tham's womenfolk also they send bread and dishes of food and to the *Gushpurs* they send one dish each. The *Gushpurs* are not allowed to come to the host's house with the Tham and Elders. They send the food for them to their various lodgings.

When he has eaten the Tham comes out. He says: "Blessings on you!" and they reply: "On your life blessings!" The master of the house comes out in front of the door with the Tham. 534
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23 *Asvoms* . . . *Asnik* *bi* — the sentence is grammatically obscure and probably faulty, *Asvoms* unless it is adjectival, seems to require a verb, such as "they carry away from . . .".
masivviki — an alternative reading is: *masivv* *As* . . .
asvikan — is the p.p.c. active of *bilivgas* used absolutely.

Then from the house of entertainment there is (sent) a dish on which they put as the Wazir's portion, a leg (of mutton), and *sherbat* along with bread; and also there is a dish apiece for the Headman and the two Hunza Trangfas on which they put a leg. Then for the cooks there are the fat of the two goats and their necks and skins. And for the musicians there is from ancient times a wooden jar which it is the custom to give to them filled with the oil from the *sherbat*. From that evening's food they set something aside and in the morning, and they bring it with *qurūt tsamik* from the host's house to the place of assembly.

When the Tham stays thus for a month or two months in Herber every day the people who are exempt from carrying loads bring to the Tham's house two goats and a lump of ghee and bread, which they have made with 15 *chuqs* of grain, and *sherbat*. And every day the Tham gives green grass to the Elders for their horses. To the Wazir grass is given from five houses and they give the Wazir one *chuti* of grain (for his horse). For the horses each village gives (him?) a rope.

When the hospitalities have come to an end they give a goat and bread (made) of five *chuqs* of grain. This is called *Otaq*. The custom of *Otaq* is as follows: One field has been given to each of them by the Thams and on that they have imposed the *Otaq* tax. Further the exempted man every year gives the Tham as *ilban* four animals viz. one he-goat, one ram, one she-goat and one yearling kid. Followers of the second rank and load-carriers give every year three animals viz. one she-goat, one sheep and one yearling kid. These are the tax (imposed) on load-carriers. Further, each household gives the Tham four (measures of) grain, which they call *sabūy jēti* and each household gives a *hichuti* of barley, which is called *yashē yürk*. It is the custom also for every village to give one rope each for as many dogs and horses as there may be.

The Khudāabād *ilban* is (assigned) to Guahpur Nafis, and the Nazimābād *ilban* to Shābāz Khan and the Misgār *ilban* is vested

19 *yashē yürk* — Wakhi for "horse's barley"; *yāl* 'horse' and *yürk* 'barley'.

21 *Nazimābād* — the older name of this place was *Šikā Das*.

ban'o x meat and food given annually
by the Mir of Hunza to the people
on certain festivals:

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1. At the Bopfan: one ox, one very small kid, one very small lamb.
 2. At Nauroz: the flesh of an ox and bread brought from the Masjid near the Baltit polo-ground and distributed to the people of the "12 kanants" the name of each section being called out in turn.
318. — *bano dilam* ... *tsor Baltit-kutsor udam* they bring the "bano" ... first they give it to the people of Baltit. 318.7. (Cp. Sh. *ban'o* = *bagyo*, share).

1. *bag y* resin, gum (of fruit trees), H. gond. — *bag du-bila* gum exudes.

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The resin of apricot and peach trees is eaten dissolved in water and is said to be strengthening. It is also used as adhesive gum. Others say apricot resin is a remedy for heartburn.

2. *bag, bag* the Call to Prayer

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axomdarn: mazaraf bag gam

the Mullahs call out the Call

Prayer over the grave. 312.9. *Pre*

bagot, -*iq y* fortified camp, cantonment; pl. separate bodies of men. — *ine bagot delim padia* that King who has made entrenchments. 32.2. (Cp. Sh. *bagot*, *baguta*, Kho. *bagot*, both meaning breastwork of stones, 'sagar').

bag, -*ila y*.

1. Tribute (as paid by Mirs of Hunza and Nagir to Kashmir), tax. —

bag iela to pay tribute to him.

ugia bag gairmi he will take tribute of their beads. 93.20.

Giltum tham: Chapuransum bag

urdam The Gilgit Thams used to collect tribute from Chupuran

Ayesh was a most jovial character. He had the most pleasant smiling happy countenance of any man I've ever met. He was always either laughing or smiling and every time I looked at him I had to smile as well. He was a handsome man but in contrast to the Mir, who had a good head of dark hair, Ayesh was balding, the same as I.

It was most pleasant to see the splendid cordial relationship that existed between him and the Mir's entire family.

"How are you coming along with your quest for information?" asked the Mir.

"Exceptionally well, sir," I replied. "But there are also many questions that only you can answer and I'm hoping that you can spare a few minutes some time within the next few days in private so that I may gain this information."

"Any time you say," replied the Mir pleasantly. "I'm at your disposal. You mention the time and that will be it."

"You are indeed very kind to grant me this great favor and I appreciate it," I said.

So there and then we made an appointment for 5 o'clock the following day.

Every meal at the Mir's was a joy and a delight and both the Mir and the Rani were always present. I had already mentioned to him that this was a trouble and an imposition and too much to expect of him. But he said that it was the way he wanted it and that nothing was too good and no effort too great for his guests. Well, what can you do with a man like that?

Then he informed me concerning my friend's health. "The doctor has things under control now," he told me, "but he will remain here with me as my guest at the palace during your stay so there will be no worries

CHAPTER 31

Breakfast Chitchat

122 THE MIR was a most tolerant and understanding host.
● 574 I can't say for sure whether or not all his guests were
treated as well as I, but I have no reason to believe
otherwise.

Sometimes I would get down to breakfast alone at
8 o'clock in the morning. On other occasions there was
Jahangir, sometimes Cec and on some occasions the
doctor and the Mir's uncle and a few other individuals.
I usually tried to get down at 8 o'clock . . . yet, there
were occasions when I got down at 6 o'clock, if I had
some adventure or specific project in view.

353 I remember this specific breakfast because the first
792 thing I said to the Mir after I was seated at the table
was, "I would judge that you were very fond of the
Aga Khan."

You see, it wasn't very hard for me to judge this
fact because our apartment was hung with pictures